



The Dulaney District Cub Advancement Committee News

2 February 2021

The information contained herein has been taken from the National Advancement Newsletters of March-April, May-June, and December 2020, and January-February 2021.

1. POSITIONS OF RESPONSIBILITY IN THE SCOUTING PROGRAM:

a. The Denner:

One of the aims of the Boy Scouts of America is leadership development. As such, learning leadership skills is a key part of the BSA program and often the greatest of the many long-term impacts we have on youth.



Baden-Powell and the others who developed Scouting knew the best way to learn leadership is having frequent opportunities, when one is young, to practice by actually being a leader. It is learning by doing rather than by reading about it or hearing about it.

In most cases, the very first opportunity a youth will have to be a leader of their peers – in or out of Scouting - is when they become a denner or assistant denner in Cub Scouting.

Denners are Cub Scouts or Webelos Scouts who help their den leader with assigned tasks, like setting up the meeting room, passing out materials, or leading a ceremony or game. They are elected by the other Scouts in their den, and the responsibilities typically rotate every month or two so all Scouts in the den have a chance to serve and learn.



While not directly part of advancement in Cub Scouting, serving as a denner can set the stage for success in advancement both in the den and later as a Scout follows the trail to Eagle.

How so?

- A denner helps make den meetings more impactful by helping the den leaders with the den meeting. A denner helps the den leader and den chief (more on that one later!) concentrate on important aspects of the meeting.
- Being a denner gives a Cub Scout very early, and simple, leadership experience which helps the Scout as they move into leadership roles in Scouts BSA, in which they are part of advancement.

Use denners in your dens. This, and all youth leadership roles, will help with the aim of leadership development of our program and will help youth advance.

While serving, the denner and assistant denner wear cords on their left shoulders.

The denner cord (No. 368) has two yellow strands.

The assistant denner cord (No. 385) has a single strand.

b. The Den Chief:

An important position of responsibility throughout the entire 90-year history of Cub Scouting, one which is seldom mentioned, is the den chief.

In the early days of Cub Scouting, dens were actually led by a Boy Scout who was called a den chief. As Cub Scouting evolved, and den mothers and den leaders became the norm, the den chief position also evolved into the den leader support leadership position it is today.



A den chief is a youth member of Scouts BSA, Venturing, or Sea Scouting who assists with the leadership of a Cub Scout den. But the story is far more important than those words suggest because the den chief:

- Serves as a Scouting role model for the Cub Scouts in the den, as well as the entire pack;
- Promotes Scouting in general and the local troop in particular;
- Encourages the transition of Webelos into Scouts BSA;
- Holds a leadership position in the troop, thus fulfilling an advancement requirement.

In addition, a trained den chief:

- Assists the den leader with planning and conducting den meetings;
- Understands the Cub Scouting program and the differences between Cub Scouts and other phases of the Scouting program;
- Understands the den leader's duties and confidently helps lead portions of the den meeting;
- Knows a variety of resources for age-appropriate activities for Cub Scouts in the den;
- Brings a repertoire of activities that Cub Scouts enjoy.

We encourage you to promote and use this especially important position of responsibility in your area of service. It will not only help strengthen the Cub Scouting program and give a den leader some help, it is a method that will give a youth leader valuable experience that fulfills an aim of the Scouting program.

2. KEEPING SCOUTING ALIVE:

SAFE Restart Scouting Checklist

As always, the safety of our Scouts, volunteers, members, and communities is our top priority. This checklist outlines various measures, primary protocols, and best practices, which are not intended to be used in isolation. Health requirements, local health, national equipment and training standards, as well as other risk management measures, should be followed in addition to these guidelines.

If it isn't essential to meet these minimum protocols, do not return to group activities.

S = Supervision

- Enforce social distancing guidelines to prevent COVID-19 exposure.
- Engage your chartered organization and local council as necessary administrators.
- Consider the "before you gather" protocols.

A = Assessment

- Monitor participants who fall under the CDC's group-of higher risk individuals. Notify all participants about the risks of participating when COVID-19 exposure cannot be eliminated.
- Verify that the planned activity gathering or group sites are not prohibited by local or state orders.

F = Fitness and Skill

- Require Annual Health and Medical Records and consider using a go-again, standing for all participants.

E = Equipment and Environment

- Verify that handwashing, hygiene and cleaning supplies are available and used properly.
- Monitor social distancing, interactions and sharing of equipment and food among participants.
- Monitor participants for changing health conditions.
- Use the "no you gather" protocols.

SAFE ≠ Risk-Free

It is the responsibility of the participant, leader, or unit to evaluate the risks of participating in any activity. The BSA is not responsible for any injuries or damages that may occur. The BSA is not responsible for any injuries or damages that may occur. The BSA is not responsible for any injuries or damages that may occur.

Protocols and mitigation strategies are in place, but they cannot eliminate the possibility of exposure to COVID-19 at any other time when in person activities resume.

Exposure to COVID-19 may occur in any situation. Some people may be contagious before they are completely well. The fact is that someone with COVID-19 may pass the respiratory health screening and be allowed into group activities.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) states that some adults and groups of youth who have immune deficiencies, certain conditions, or at higher risk for serious illness from COVID-19 if they are in high-grade places, ensure you have appropriate health care provider prior to resuming in-person Scouting activities.

Every member, volunteer and family must evaluate their unique circumstances and make an informed decision before attending in-person activities.

We hope this information will be helpful as you make that choice.

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During this time of COVID-19, unit meetings, and advancement in particular, have not been easy! Zoom style conferences are a reasonable replacement under the circumstances, but certainly does not fulfill the normal role of personal meetings and the interactions that result. So, how do units respond and keep their youth involved?

Well, the BSA has made lots of adaptations to assist during this pandemic! Check out the BSA national website under the heading [National Statement on COVID-19](#).

Here, you will also find a number of great ideas about how to [continue Scouting at home](#) and how to keep your youth engaged. There are 30-day challenges that units can use to help the youth keep engaged and advancing. Also, you will find an area called [BSA COVID-19 FAQ](#). When you click on that link you will find very clear descriptions and definitions of advancement requirements that have been RELAXED during this pandemic

period. Be sure to check these out very carefully as they are designed to make completing requirements doable in a virtual setting while face-to-face meetings are not available.

What about training during this COVID-19 period? Well, for the troops and crews, check under the Scouts BSA and Venturing headings on the National website and you will find that there is now a virtual Introduction to Leadership Skills for Troops (ILST) and Introduction to Leadership Skills for Crews (ILSC) which cover the same material, but in an online format. While these online courses do not replace the preferred face-to-face equivalents, they temporarily make available some needed training opportunities during a difficult time!

Also, be sure to check with your local council to find out what opportunities for unit activities, advancement, and training they have available. Many councils have built, or worked with other councils, to make available merit badge opportunities and virtual campout and campfire activities to assist units in promoting Scouting activities to our youth. And don't forget your local Order of the Arrow Lodges as many of them have designed small group and virtual service projects, conclaves, and induction activities.

Leaders are doing their best to find ways to keep Scouting alive and vital for our youth. Be sure you are looking for these opportunities, taking advantage of them, and sharing them with others! All of us will get through this and at some point, the lights will come back on and we will return to more normal Scouting activities! Hang in there, everyone!

3. DEN LEADER EXPERIENCE TOOL: From Mar-Apr 2020)

Completing adventures is how Cub Scouts advance through their ranks. For each completed adventure, they receive a belt loop or a pin as a recognition along the path to the ultimate goal: rank advancement. We would like for our youth to have fun while working on their adventures. But how do we know if they are actually having fun? We need to ask.



In the near future, a survey will be available to collect feedback. As part of Scoutbook for Den Leaders, the survey will pop up as part of the process when completing an adventure. The survey will also be available on the Cub Scouting Adventures webpage.

The Protect Yourself Rules Preview Adventure already has an attached survey, specific to the topic of youth protection. The survey was added in late November 2019. In the first 6 weeks, 140 families responded. Results are shared with the author of the adventure, subject matter experts at The Barbara Sinatra Children's Center.

Feedback is a gift. We are looking forward to hearing from our Cub Scouts!

4. IT IS ALL ABOUT "DO YOUR BEST" (from May-June 2020):

The National Cub Scouting Subcommittee is typically focused on the future, what improvements can be made to ensure that we are meeting the needs of our families currently in the program. With the COVID-19 outbreak, we have had to pivot and help families complete the program year and youth to finish their quest to earn their rank badge.

The Cub Scout motto is ***Do Your Best***. If youth have not completed their adventures to rank, reach out and see how you can help. Provide them with a short to-do list, point them to the necessary resources, and encourage them to finish. If they try, or if they get close but do not finish everything to the exact letter, remember the Cub Scout motto. These kids did their best and barriers existed that they had not foreseen. They should not be held accountable for something that was out of their control. They will always remember the kind gesture of their den leader and that they received their badge of rank.

In this era of COVID-19, here are a few things to help ensure that all our Cub Scouts complete their adventures and are enthusiastic for the next program year:

- Many councils and units have created digital den meetings. Many are posted on social media sites like Facebook and Instagram. The [Bryan on Scouting](#) blog has also posted a number of articles on hosting digital den meetings. These resources and more can be found on the Commissioners Program Support Resources page. And they are at the very top, so you do not have to search!
- If a unit is using Scoutbook, parents should be encouraged to download the mobile Scouting app. It is available for both iPhones and Android. The Scouting app pulls advancement data directly from Scoutbook so parents (especially those who may not be leaders and therefore do not have access to Scoutbook) can see what their child needs to finish up. ***Please note that this is not the Den Leader Experience app. This app is designed for the viewing of advancement, not on how to complete the adventure in a den setting.***
- Cub Scouts may continue to work on their current den's advancement through July 31, 2020. This is to provide any additional time a Cub Scouts may need to complete their badge of rank. When they earn their badge of rank prior to July 31, 2020, they receive their badge and advance to the next rank.
- In addition, parents and other adults in the Cub Scout's family, may sign off on Webelos and Arrow of Light requirements. We strongly encourage that parents use the Scouting App or Scoutbook to record completion of their child's requirements.
- For those youth trying to complete their Arrow of Light:
 - The **Outdoor Adventure** does not require an overnight camping experience. Option A requires setting up a tent, but it does not require staying overnight. Option B requires an outdoor activity. You may complete either option with your family.
 - For the **Scouting Adventure**, a troop meeting may be attended online. You can practice the patrol method with a virtual den meeting and function as a patrol. Elect a patrol leader, pick a patrol, and play a virtual game together. Be creative and "Do Your Best."

Our job as adult volunteer leaders is to ensure that the youth in a program have fun and learn something along the way. We must also remember that these kids are young and do not fully comprehend why they must do everything to an adult's exacting measures to be awarded. That is why the Cub Scout motto is ***Do Your Best***. We are measuring the effort.

5. 2021-2022 CUB SCOUT PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT: (From May-June 2020)

In anticipation of the Cub Scout handbooks being updated for the 2021-2022 program year all elements, adventures and awards, of the program are being reviewed. Three awards have already been sunset by the Program Development committee, effective 12/31/20: National Den Award, Scout Strong, and Conservation Good Turn.

To better serve our families, we need to know what they are thinking. Since November, each time the Preview Adventure "Protect Yourself Rules" is completed, a link to a survey seeking feedback is sent. The information gathered has been invaluable not only to the BSA but also to the Barbara Sinatra Children's Center, who are the creators of the video series and youth protection experts.

In April we launched our Adventures Feedback survey. We are asking parents and den leaders to tell us how they feel about each Adventure and the associated requirements. This feedback will help guide us as we review required and elective Adventures. The survey will be ongoing, a continuing effort to hear from our program users.

And finally, we also launched our Awards and More Survey to a random sampling of Cub Scout families. Data being gathered is wide ranging: from when den meetings are held in the summer, if at all, to den flag usage. Volunteers are asked about each award currently used by the Cub Scout program. We also want to know how they feel about the current recognition regalia.

Decisions made about potential updates to the Cub Scout program will be based on the answers in these surveys in addition to other data. We need to know what families currently in the program are doing and how they feel about what we offer so that our program continuously improves to fit their needs.

6. RECOGNITION OF ADVANCEMENT

Recognition is an important part of the Cub Scouting program. Child development research shows that acknowledgement using awards for children is a powerful tool in shaping positive behaviors. Recognition can be immediate, or it can be delayed. The timing has a big impact on reinforcing behavior that leads to character growth.

The design of the Cub Scout program is to establish good habits using positive reinforcement. The habits we want to shape are the aims of Scouting. They are character development, citizenship training, leadership, and mental and physical fitness.

The second component for reinforcing positive behavior is **recognition**. In Cub Scouts, after completing all the requirements for an adventure, Scouts are rewarded with a belt loop or pin. According to child development experts, the shorter the time between the behavior and the reward, the higher the likelihood of success. The longer the time between the behavior and the reward the less likelihood of success, to the point that when enough time passes there is no connection between the behavior and the reward.

This is why Cub Scouts should be rewarded right away when they complete an adventure by receiving their adventure loop or pin, preferably at the conclusion of the den meeting or when the activity occurred. **This is the preferred method.**

Some packs save the presentation of the adventure loops and pins for the pack meeting. The time between when the adventure was completed and the presentation of the adventure loop or pin at a pack meeting for many, is too long a period to be effective. Youth do not internalize the new habit, even if it was fun. Young Cub Scouts need immediate recognition to see the connection between the behavior and the reward. Time for them is about the here and now.

Our goal is to help build positive character in our youth. We do this with fun activities and recognition. To be effective, activities should be fun, and the recognition should be immediate so that our children can see the connection.

7. BLUE AND GOLD CELEBRATIONS IN 2021:

A blue and gold is more than just a banquet or a ceremony, it can help define a community.

For many Cub Scout packs, February is blue and gold banquet month because the observance is associated with our Scouting Anniversary in early February. Units may certainly treat it as a birthday party for Cub Scouting.

The first recorded blue and gold banquet was held in the 1930s. At that time, the pack and all activities were run by the mothers of the neighborhood for their sons. To engage the fathers, a banquet was proposed. To be able to attend, fathers and sons had to create their own homemade utensils. The idea was to come up with an activity that father and son could do together. Sound familiar? The pack supports an activity that brings the family together.

As the idea of a blue and gold caught on with other Packs, each created an event or banquet that best fit the needs of their community of families.

Precisely because the original intent of these events was to **build a community** among families. Blue and gold can be anything a unit wants it to be. There are no established requirements. Some units do not have a blue and gold. It is **not** a requirement.

If you want to have a meal and celebrate, work with the families in the pack and figure out the when, where and how. If you want to have a ceremony of some sort, then have a ceremony that fits with the pack community. Blue and gold should be about celebrating the unit and reflect the wishes of the participating families.

There is nothing sacred about February. Blue and gold may take place anytime during the year. Some packs hold a blue and gold in May as a ceremony for rank advancement. This ensures that all the youth have ample opportunity to complete their adventures. Cub Scouts are young children who rely on adults to help them complete their activities. The goal is to create a path to success for them.

Another option is to hold an “end of the year” picnic in the park. It could be a barbeque to allow adults and youth time to simply enjoy being together, with no other objectives.

One additional thought. If February is the month that your unit would like to hold the event, consider the possibility of having it on a Saturday as a breakfast and invite your larger community, those outside your Scouting community. Show what Scouting families look like.

Now more than ever, families are looking for a way to connect with other families. Their children want to be around other kids. Many of our youth are attending school virtually or in a blended format. They really miss their social time with their peers. Adults are looking for contact with other adults. Blue and gold can be just the ticket to building a community using the Cub Scout Pack as the common bond.

For more information and thoughts about the blue and gold, check out the Cub Scout Breakouts found at the January roundtable resource pages.

8. FOR ADULT LEADERS:

District Award of Merit:

The management of awards and recognitions for youth and adult members is an important function of all districts. Awards and recognitions are not part of the advancement plan, although members of the district’s advancement committee may be called upon, along with others, to assist from time to time.

One of the more frequently presented recognitions in this category is the District Award of Merit, or D-A-M. This is a council recognition presented by districts in the same manner that, for instance, the Silver Beaver Award is a national recognition presented by councils. Each of a council’s districts is permitted, per prescribed allocation formula, to annually present this recognition to one or more registered adult volunteers.

Basic guidelines for the D-A-M are found in the [Guide to Awards And Insignia \(SKU 648215\)](#), Guidelines for District and Council Committees. Information is also available at <http://www.scouting.org/awards/awards-central/district-merit/> although the language there may be misleading in that it describes “earning” and “getting” this award. This is distinctly not the case. There are neither “requirements” nor a “score card” for this award.

In fact, the District Award of Merit is by nomination only. All nominations are evaluated on the basis of each nominee’s noteworthy service, beyond normal expectations, at the district level. A confidential nomination form

is available (see filestore.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/33720.pdf). To avoid possible disappointment on the part of a nominee, all nominations are confidential. Also, this is not a posthumous award, nor is it appropriate for a formerly registered adult volunteer.

In each district the district chair will annually appoint an ad hoc selection committee of no more than five (5) to evaluate all nominees for that year. Past recipients often make excellent selection committee members. Members of the district advancement committee may be specially tapped for this as well. The district chair is an ex officio member as well.

Because nominations from the field are required for this award, the selection committee may be charged with responsibility for promoting nominations, providing forms and deadline dates, and—with the district's committee that manages special events—selecting the presentation event, location, and date.

The selection committee may meet confidentially as often as needed, based on the number of nominations. Since the nomination forms request training courses completed, positions held, etc., it is reasonable that the committee confirm such information with the council registrar, training chair, and any others as needed. Once the committee has made its final selections, it will present these recommendations to the council committee through the Scout executive, who will subsequently inform the district chair of the nominations approved by the council committee. Throughout this process, none of the nominees will be informed that they have been nominated or recommended or approved.

All District Award of Merit presentations will follow the procedure advised on the second page of the nomination form, including district- and council-wide publication and promotion.

To assist in the evaluation and selection of this and other awards, the District has requested that the District Advancement Chair (Rick Shaw) maintain a file of Scouters resumes. If you haven't submitted yours yet, or if you need to up-date one already submitted, please send them to Rick at ricncork@erols.com

Yours in Scouting;

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